

including a housing shaped and dimensioned to be hand-held within which is housed:

input means for feeding input identification particulars of a vehicle parked in a parking zone into the device;

5 communication means for sending the input identification particulars to the remote station for comparison with the reference identification particulars and receiving the result of said comparison;

signal generation means for selectively generating a warning signal in response to said result;

10 timing means for timing the duration for which the vehicle is parked in the parking zone;

processor means for calculating a monetary amount due for parking for said duration in the parking zone;

display means for displaying the monetary amount due; and

15 monetary receiving means for receiving the monetary amount due.

14. A system for monitoring and identifying vehicles in a plurality of parking zones, the system including

20 a remote station at which reference identification particulars of vehicles are stored;

at least one device for identifying a vehicle parked in one of a plurality of parking zones with which the device is associated, the device including a housing shaped and dimensioned to be hand-held within which is housed:

25 input means for feeding input identification particulars of a vehicle in a parking zone into the device;

communication means for receiving the reference identification particulars from the remote station;

storage means for storing said reference identification particulars;

timing means for timing the duration for which the vehicle is parked in the parking zone;

processor means connected to the input means and to the storage means, the processor means including comparator means for comparing
5 the input identification particulars with the reference identification particulars, the processor means being operable to calculate a monetary amount due for parking for said duration in the parking zone so that the device functions as a parking meter;

10 signal generation means for selectively generating a warning signal in response to said comparison;

display means for displaying the monetary amount due; and
monetary receiving means for receiving the monetary amount due.

15. A system as claimed in Claim 13 or Claim 14, in which the communication means is a wireless communication means.

15 16. A device as claimed in Claim 13, Claim 14 or Claim 15, in which the monetary receiving means includes card reading means for reading information stored on a card and feeding it to the processor means for processing payment electronically.

20 17. A system as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims 13 to 16 inclusive, in which the input means includes a reader capable of reading a tag device hidden in or on the vehicle in a wireless fashion, the tag device carrying the said identification particulars of the vehicle.

25 18. A system as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims 13 to 17 inclusive, which includes a control centre and a plurality of remote stations at remote locations associated with parking zones, each remote

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station being in communication with the control centre via a telecommunication network to receive reference identification particulars and each device being in wireless communication with an associated remote station.

5 19. A system as claimed in Claim 18, in which the telecommunication network is a cellular telephone network.

20. A system as claimed in Claim 19, in which the reference identification particulars are downloaded by means of SMS messaging.

10 21. A system as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims 16 to 20 inclusive, in which the telecommunication network includes the Internet.

22. A system as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims 13 to 21 inclusive, in which the remote station includes alternate communication means for communicating with other databases.

15 23. A method of monitoring and identifying a vehicle in a parking zone, the method including

 feeding identification particulars of a vehicle in a parking zone into a hand-held device;

 transmitting the identification particulars to a remote station;

20 comparing said identification particulars of the vehicle in the parking zone with reference identification particulars at the remote station;

 selectively generating a warning signal in response to the comparison;